

Then, burn me

by GarGoyl

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Summary: AU. Shiemi Moriyama, a young Flower Priestess stricken by misfortune, falls in a forbidden love with the exorcist brought at her bedside in the dead of night. But Rin Okumura has a ring on his finger and secrets darker than any Flower Priestess could imagine.

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## 1. Chapter 1

**\*\*CHAPTER 1\*\***

A/N " Hello everyone! I must say I'm pleasantly surprised about how much attention the 'trailer' of this fic got right off the bat, especially seeing how this is my first Blue Exorcist story ever. And to be honest, I'm always a bit nervous when writing new characters. \*takes a deep breath\* Here it goes, hope you guys enjoy it ;)

\* \* \*

><p>A harsh wind was blowing from the east, carrying with it an unsavory scent of bad food and garbage, but not cold enough to harden the mud under their boots. In the dark, the unpaved path among the uneven rows of dwellings would have been treacherous for the unadvised walker, sharp boulders dotting the sticky layer which seemed purported to suck in footwear. Konekomaru Miwa was shivering in his thin clothes " ever since he'd come to the capital this particular peculiarity of the weather was constantly taking him by surprise " the days were hot, sometimes unbearably so, while the nights were unexpectedly cold.<p>

The young monk stopped under a pale streetlamp while icy fingers dug into his coat pocket and impatiently whipped out a piece of paper, unfolding it.

"I believe we're close now, master," he said. "The house is somewhere

around hereâ€| "

A snort came in reply. "The slums for me, eh, Konekomaru?"

The boy sighed again. "I supposed that's why it's called penitence work. But there's nothing shameful in it, an exorcist's work is nothing but noble."

"Ohâ€| so Mephisto instructed you to lecture me as well, on top of everything. Just because I burned his stupid statue! Should have done more, for good measureâ€| "

"I-I wasn't lecturing you, master. Oh, there! There it is!"

The house they were seeking was indeed in sight, mounted as it was on a small hill of sorts, the slope covered by a modest but well tended garden. A small path of white, smooth stones led from the rusty gate up to two low wooden pavilions, winding among rich shrubbery and flowerbeds. The garden looked beautiful in the moonlight and the air was surprisingly fragrant, making the nearby stench and filth of the slums a distant memory.

"Only a Flower Priestess could turn a place like this into a piece of heaven," Miwa noticed, trotting up the path, followed closely by the cloaked figure. He warily assumed that under the large hood pulled down to his mouth, his master was still grumbling profanities.

"A Flower Priestess?"

Konekomaru stopped in front of the door, hand extended to knock and scowled, turning abruptly. "Master, have you not read-â€|?"

No answer.

"Well then, I shall remind you. The victim is a young girl named Shiemi Moriyama, a Flower Priestess just like her grandmother, born with the gift. The grandmother passed away a short while ago, only the mother remains. She would not give me many details, only that the girl is plagued by a demon which shows up at all hours and torments her horribly." The monk paused, sighing. "You know, master, the problem is that simple people are often reluctant to speak ofâ€| such matters. It's rather shameful, since it is believed by many that the person pursued by a demon must have done something to deserve it."

He turned and knocked and almost immediately the door was pulled aside and a sturdy woman in her forties dressed in an old kimono showed up in the frame. She was definitely expecting them and no words were passed between her and the two guests. Konekomaru showed her the exorcist pendant hanging around his neck and they were shown towards the other pavilion, more withdrawn from sight.

"She wouldn't say a word to me," Mrs. Moriyama said bitterly, after unlocking the door. Then she left them.

The two boys watched the deep darkness beyond the open door, like a gaping mouth.

"Master, are you sure you can handle-"

"Now, what the hell could happen, Konekomaru? I reckon that I took care of worse, what couldn't I possibly handle?"

"You haven't handled things of finesse, master. To fight a demonic entity on its own is one thing, but to remove one attached to a human without hurting the humanâ€¦" The little monk sighed. "It takes a more meticulous and delicate approach."

Rin rolled his eyes, taking off the black cloak. He wasn't supposed to be seen, but then again, unlike his older brothers he had quite the ordinary, human appearance so it was little chance anyone would recognise him. Not in the dark and not in a place like this either.

"At any rate, I'll be right outside, master. So if you need me-

"Yeah, I'll scream. Here, take this and put it on," the demon boy said, tossing the heavy fabric into his servant's arms. "Or you'll be frozen solid by the time I'm done in there."

\* \* \*

><p>She lay in bed, awake yet motionless under the soft covers. The room was cold, since the window above her bed was open, but Shiemi would not move from her spot to close it. If she had, that dreadful feeling of being locked up in a coffin would come back. But she was locked in a prison anyway, and only the demon opened the door from time to time. The demon and her mother actually, and she honestly couldn't tell which was worse.<p>

'\_Tonight, at midnight, an exorcist will come to see you\_' her mother had informed in a reproachful whisper, and suddenly a far deeper dread had gripped the poor girl. Exorcists were almost without exception priests by profession and Shiemi had always dreaded priests. They were supposed to be good people, but their faces were often hard, their eyes judging and their lips quick to utter punishment.

Perhaps that was why the demon had yet to come tonight.

The blonde made an effort to sit up, even if her aching body protested from every joint, and pulled the ragged drape separating her bed from the rest of the room. She would not even let the exorcist see her, let alone touch her. If he could, he was welcome to do his job â€" whatever that was â€" from behind the drape.

It wasn't long before light steps resounded and someone unseen entered the room, finding their way in the dark with surprising ease.

"Erâ€¦ hello?" a soft and youthful voice said, unsure. "Are you in there, Miss Ma-â€¦ uh Mori-uhâ€¦"

"Moriyama."

"Rightâ€¦ Miss Moriyama. So, could I-?"

"No!" she yelped weakly. "I m-mean, please don'tâ€¦ I-If you could remain behind the drapeâ€¦"

"Rightâ€¦ if that's what you wish."

Shiemi flinched when in the next moment a hand slipped in at the end of the drape, an exorcist pendant dangling from the long fingers. She squinted in the dark at the pale appendage, striking in its whiteness, almost too small and delicate to be a man's. Then the hand withdrew and the small stool her mother had brought in earlier creaked.

"It's alright," she said, not offering to light up the oil lamp.

"So, Miss Moriyama, could you tell me what exactly is going on?"

"No."

The blonde curled up between the sheets, with her back turned to the unseen figure. He may have been a young exorcist â€" probably not an \_aria\_ since he was bad with names â€" but like hell she was going to make things easy for him. Besides, it wasn't like she could justâ€¦ open her mouth and \_say it\_.

"You are hurt."

She was. And her mother patching her up after every \_visit\_, her mute face clearly spelling the unspoken hatred towards the daughter who had inherited the gift she herself had been deprived of was worse than the demon's teeth and claws.

"My grandmother used to say that this gift holds great perilâ€¦ Do you believe it's true? That my gift brought this upon me?" she whispered.

"Who knowsâ€¦ it's your gift so terrible?"

Shiemi turned slightly and held her hand up into the stray moon rays pouring in through the window, and with a quick spell manifested a few ripe dandelion stems. The breeze quickly scattered and carried the flakes upwards, towards the low ceiling and over the drape.

"What-â€¦? HAH! AH-CHOOOOO!"

Along with the startling sneeze a burst of blue light erupted on the other side of the cloth, making the blonde jump up from her spot, yelping as she curled up against the wall on the other side of the bed. \_What the hell was that?!\_

"Apologies," said the exorcist, as if nothing had happened.

Calming her panting somewhat, Shiemi found herself driven by a strange and unexpected curiosity, enough to move and reach for the oil lamp resting on the windowsill. A tiny flame was all it could muster, but it was enough to chase away the night shadows. After that, she crept back across the mattress and her hand moved with a will of its own, pulling the drape aside brusquely.

Whatever question had dwelled on the blonde's lips, it died

unspoken.

Her eyes widened, and all she could do was stare. The exorcist was not what she expected at all, even though the pendant she'd been shown earlier now hung on his chest, over rough black garments. The boy was younger than expected " around her age, Shiemi guessed " and he was unearthly beautiful. His spiky hair was as black as the darkest night and his skin as white as the most expensive writing paper, but the most striking were his eyes " a deep shade of blue, somewhere between sapphire and paraiba gems.

"How much do you charge per night?" she heard herself ask, like an afterthought, and immediately afterwards a malicious laughter broke out in the small room. The blasted demon was there after all.

The exorcist frowned, eyes briefly shifting their focus from Shiemi's face to somewhere past her shoulder. He nodded slowly, ominously.

"O-Oh God, please forgive me!" Shiemi cried pitifully, averting her gaze and hands flying to her mouth, suddenly aware of her messy, sweat-matted hair and the multitude of bandages covering her body under the thin gown. She must have looked absolutely hideous and now the demon was putting foul words in her mouth too.

"Miss Moriyama, please look at me," the boy said and reached out to cup her plump cheek, tilting her face up. "You're tired, you have to rest now." His hand was warm against her skin, but it only lingered there for the briefest moment. "Sleep, you're safe tonight."

His thumb traced a complicated sign on her forehead and Shiemi leaned back on the pillows, feeling suddenly drowsy. The exorcist stood to leave.

"N-No, please don't-!"

"I'll be back tomorrow night. Please, get some rest, Miss Moriyama."

"Shiemi!" the blonde whispered as the door was closing in his wake, just before falling asleep.

\* \* \*

><p>Her mother moved stiffly around the room, placing a small bowl of rice at the foot of the bed and a bucket of clean water. Shiemi had wanted to pretend that she was still asleep, even if it was well past noon by now, but her eyes had opened and she'd seen her mother, really <em>seen</em> her the way she hadn't in a long while. She'd gotten dry and bitter, the joyfulness of youth gone from her step.

"You look better today," Mrs. Moriyama said, avoiding her daughter's gaze. "Might want to clean yourself up and change your clothes."

She did feel a bit better, so as soon as her mother was gone from sight Shiemi got up and reached for the bucket, peeling off the dirty gown she'd had on for more than a week now. She washed as thoroughly as the bandages would allow and rinsed her hair, then put on a clean dress.

'\_What do you think he has that I don't?\_' a hissed voice asked, followed by the familiar chuckle, and Shiemi turned abruptly, horrorstruck and nearly knocking off the bucket. But there was no one behind her.

'\_You dumb whore\_' the demon cackled, '\_No one can save you from me.'\_

After that, hours passed in a horror-filled succession until midnight found Shiemi curled up under the covers, even more terrified than the night before. The demon could not touch her for now because of the exorcist's mark, but instead it had chosen to taunt her with poisonous words and threats.

'\_If only he knew the truth about youâ€¦ he'd not spare you another glance, you wretched thing\_'

The demon was probably right.

'\_So I dare you to tell him.'\_

\* \* \*

><p>"I will answer your questions if you agree to answer mine."<p>

She exhaled, staring blankly at the dark ceiling. A light breeze was coming through the small window above her bed, making the thin drape flutter slightly and blurring the shape of the person sitting on the other side.

"I can do that," the exorcist replied simply, to her complete surprise. Why would he?

"Really? You'll answer any question I ask?"

"Yes."

Shiemi found it rather peculiar that someone would indulge her in this fashion, but still, it was a welcome distraction. After all, there were only these moments when she could forget about the pain. When it would somewhatâ€¦ fade in the background. She hadn't even thought about what exactly she wanted to ask the boy, other than his name.

"Then I will tell you."

\*\*\_To be continued \_\*\*

## 2. Chapter 2

\*\*CHAPTER 2\*\*

A/N â€" Hello my dear readers! I am soâ€¦ soâ€¦ happy and grateful for all your amazing feedback as well as completely wrapped in this plot. Anyway, I took down the 'trailer' because it did contain some vague yet still-there spoilers and I wouldn't want to ruin any surprises in advance for you, would I? Better to just have everyone

shocked when it happens ;)) And for now, without further rants on my part, enjoy the new chap;)

\* \* \*

><p>Shiemi Moriyama was beautiful.<p>

Even covered in rags and bandages and scars, she was beautiful. Rin couldn't exactly pinpoint what exactly about her was so endearing, but it was rather something indefinite in her gracious frailty and those lovely, large green eyes which had stared back at him with a mixture of fear and pure awe, in that nearly magic moment when he'd laid eyes on her for the first time (and which of course her demon had promptly and successfully ruined). It was also in her gift with the ways of nature, and which could only have sprung from a kind and compassionate heart, in that absolute innocence of her spirit which was entirely free of any malice, rejection or judgment. All that wasn't something he'd stumbled upon often, if ever. People like Shiemi Moriyama did not belong in his world, so he took this encounter as a precious gift, past the absolute novelty of the situation.

Rin had had more than a week of sleepless nights by now, as part of the blasted penitence work imposed by Mephisto, and things hadn't exactly gone smoothly along the way either. Only the previous night, upon leaving Shiemi's house they'd gone to tend to a few other patients before the break of dawn and a possessed man had attacked Konekomaru, very nearly getting the little monk good. A tuft of the man's hair had actually needed to be set on fire before the spirit had finally given up and abandoned their victim's exhausted body. All that being said, this was the only visit he was actually not dreading, yet still not quite daring to look forward to. One never knew when things could simply go awfully wrong.

But still, he should not get worked up too soon. At least for now she'd agreed to talk, so maybe getting to the root of her misfortune without employing ultimate means might have been possible after all.

"Soâ€¦ your mother says you won't speak to her. Why is that?"

On the other side of the drape, Shiemi gasped, almost inconspicuously, but resisted the urge to curl up again and fall into a stubborn silence. What would he think ofâ€¦ well, he'd probably end up thinking badly of her anyway, very badly. This was only the beginning.

"Pleaseâ€¦ tell me your name first? It would be more comfortable if at leastâ€¦ I knew your name," the blonde thought, only afterwards realizing she'd actually said it out loud.

"It's Rin. Rin Okumura."

His human name couldn't have possibly meant anything to her.

Shiemi exhaled slowly, trying to keep her voice steady. "Well, Rin Okumura, do you think it's wicked and disrespectful for a daughter to disagree with her mother's decisions?"

"I think it depends on the decisions, no?"

The blonde squirmed slightly, fingers twisting in the covers. "She wanted me to marry. She said that we're alone in the house, that we have no man to protect us. And since she is already too oldâ€¦ and I could still practice as a priestess, even if I got married, just like Grandmotherâ€¦ Anyway, she found a man. He was much older than me and I loathed him from the very moment I laid eyes on him, he was a brute. But mother said he'd be good for us, he'd keep us safe and fed if things were to go badly and no one would bother us again. But then he-"

'\_I don't think you should tell him after all. What would be the point? He'd pity you at most'\_

Shiemi opened her eyes and suddenly the demon was there, hideous face hovering above her, mouth full of sharp teeth and yellow eyes full of malice. A clawed hand reached down for her throat.

"YOU'RE PISSING ME OFF! STOP TAUNTING AND FUCKING SHOW YOURSELF ALREADY! Fucking come out and have a taste of my fl-"

Rin stopped in mid-sentence, eyes wide in horror as he saw Shiemi having curled up at the end of the bed in horror as he'd dashed forward through the drape, literally jumping onto the bed. But the demon \_had been there\_, ready to harm the girl again, the bastard had simply lied in wait for the mark to wear off.

\_Shit. \_"I-I'm sorry, Miss Moriyamaâ€¦ I just-"

"You saw it too! Y-You can see it?!"

The boy nodded, half-shrugging. He could \_hear\_ it too, even when the demon spoke to her only, but since that wasn't something a human exorcist would have been able to do it was better kept under wraps.

"Miss Moriyama, please forgive my bad temper and foul mouth," he grumbled awkwardly, retreating. "I didn't mean to scare you."

"Pleaseâ€¦ stay," the blonde whispered. "And it's Shiemi."

Rin mustered a wry smile. "Right, Shiemiâ€¦ Uh, I forgot about something." He dug in his back pocket and took out a small bottle of sorts. "A healer gave me this for you. Works better and faster than the traditionalâ€¦ eh, patching up if you will, so if you'll allow me-"

The blonde relaxed somewhat and laid back down on the pillows, eyes trained on the exorcist's fingers as he carefully unscrewed the tiny lid.

"You were telling me something about your mother and the fiancÃ©e she'd chosen for you," the demon boy said, focused on pouring some of the liquid on his fingertips and tracing a complicated pattern along her bare arm.

Combined with the magic, the potion would seep into her whole body and gradually heal any injury she'd sustained, without the need of further, often ineffective examination. This was also something



regular healers would not have been able to provide, but Shiemi's condition was rather poor and Rin was willing to bend more than a few 'professional rules' to help her. Well, not that he'd ever had any qualms about bending the rules in general and he could safely bet on her ignorance in the matter anyway.

It wasn't like she could ever imagine who and what he really was.

Shiemi sighed, wondering if she would be able to do it after all. It had seemed easier earlier, but now— with him so close, touching her— Rin had light, gentle hands, and the touch of his fingers was soft, even if their pads were somewhat calloused — the hand of someone working with tools all day, like Grandmother's hands had been.

Or the hands of someone wielding a weapon.

Quite the strange thought, but then again maybe exorcists did use weapons upon occasion? Shiemi had no clue about it, but exploring hypotheses was still something— anything to get a distraction from the present moment. But then, before she had to go further with the story, maybe she could ask him another question?

"I told you something, Rin. So, my turn now?"

"Sure."

"Do you— use a weapon of sorts? I mean, in general? Do exorcists use weapons?"

Rin nodded. "Yeah, swords and spears. I— uh— was trained to use a sword, but it's not— uh— often required that I carry it around, you know?"

Shiemi looked at his hands some more, wondering what exactly about her question had made the boy uncomfortable and brought that stiffness in his shoulders along with the almost inconspicuous pause in his movements. Maybe he was still wary about scaring her earlier and thought that this talk of weapons was making things worse?

Darn, apparently the little Flower Priestess was far more intuitive than Rin had given her credit. If she could tell just by looking at his hands that he was a weapon wielder— And she had been studying him too, apparently. Which was in itself a complete surprise, because it had never ever occurred to Rin that someone might actually bother to do that. He just didn't think there was anything worth studying to begin with.

"So what happened afterwards? With your fiancée?"

The blonde gulped, eyes still fixed on the exorcist's fingers, since she would not dare look up at his face. And then suddenly she saw it, gleaming palely in the moonlight — a small circle of gold hugging his fourth finger. She blinked, in utter confusion, could he be—? But it looked so odd! On a hand so small, a boy's hand, not a man's, a wedding ring looked almost— wrong.

And somehow it just made everything so much worse, even with the relief that under these circumstances he couldn't have been a

priest.

"He's dead," Shiemi said simply, allowing her eyelids to drop. "And I'm notâ€¦ I'm not sorryâ€¦" "The demon killed him. Onlyâ€¦ that didn't happen right awayâ€¦ First, there was the engagement. If only my grandmother had still been alive, I just know she would have been on my side and she would have opposed my mother's choiceâ€¦ But I couldn't. And after thatâ€¦"

'\_HA! HA! HA! You don't have the guts to-\_'

She took a deep breath, willing away the choking lump in her throat. "One night he came at the house... He barged in here, reeking of alcohol, and he saidâ€¦ 'We are betrothed already, and I have desires, you know. Do \_you\_ not have desires? I don't want to wait anymore.' And heâ€¦ didn't." By now, her voice had been reduced to a mere string of faint sobs and tears were sliding down her cheeks, soaking the pillows. "I cried and screamed, I called for my mother, she was in the other room, but she didn't come! Not until morning, when he was gone, and she said it was alright, because he was still going to marry me, that he'd alreadyâ€¦ signed the papers. And I just-â€¦ just-â€¦"

"Shiemiâ€¦ please, stop tormenting yourself," the demon boy said softly and she opened her eyes to discover that instead of pulling away, repelled, Rin had entwined his fingers with hers and was now leaning over her, his expression a mixture of pain and dread. Pain because he could feel her suffering almost viscerally and dread because he didn't know how to soothe it, he was clueless how to react to it even, because, God, he was almost a child himself, after all.

"Rinâ€¦ this is how I damned my soul." Shiemi struggled to prop herself up, looking him straight in the eye. "This is why the demon is here to punish me! I hated him so much, both him and my mother, but especially him! I hated him so much that I said I wanted the mouth Hell to open and swallow him alive! I gave myself to hatred and this is my punishment!"

"LIKE HELL!" the exorcist shouted and there was another burst of blue light, this time much more powerful than when he'd sneezed, and for a few moments it engulfed his whole body before extinguishing rapidly.

\_Ahhhhh shit! SHIT!\_

"W-Was thatâ€¦ \_your\_ gift?"

"H-Huh?"

"The blue light. Isâ€¦ See, I made a little deduction," Shiemi said shyly.

Shit, this was bad! Rin genuinely panicked, her \_deductions\_ were beginning to creep him out. What if she had actually deduced-

"Well, you're not a priest, you're very young, so in order for you to be a full-fledged exorcist already you must have a gift of sorts that you were born with, right?"

He exhaled slowly, relieved. That was right, Shiemi Moriyama wasn't exactly the average human, she had grown up surrounded by all sorts of \_gifted\_ peopleâ€¦ Although probably blue light was not something they were capable of.

"It's beautiful, by the way."

Rin flinched. \_Beautiful\_? What, his flames?! What was she saying?

"Your blue lightâ€¦ Blue is my favorite color."

Shiemi gasped, averting her gaze. Damn, she shouldn't have said that! Oh, why?! While blue was indeed her favorite colorâ€¦ a lot of the presently surrounding things were blue, like \_Rin's\_ \_eyes\_, for example. The thought brought the faintest shade of color in her cheeks in turn, butâ€¦ no. She couldn't think of such things. She had no right to.

'\_That's right, because you're a whore, you are taintedâ€¦ And he belongs to someone else.' \_

"Ohâ€¦ thenâ€¦ thank you. But it burns stuff, so I'm not actually supposed to use it unless there's no other wayâ€¦. Anyway, sorry for scaring you again and, well, because you wasted your turn," he said smiling.

The blonde blinked, disbelieving. Would he still answer her questions? Would he still act friendly and carefree around her, even after hearing \_all that\_? Could it have beenâ€¦ that he didn't think of her as the culprit?

"So what does the demon want, Shiemi? What does it say to you, if it speaks at all?"

She shook her head.

"Shiemi, none of this is your fault! This is not atonement for your sins, this was never \_your\_ sin!

'\_Another night has passed, now the dawn is breaking and you're still empty handed, you stupid little boy! You'll never get her away from me. Never!'\_

Rin just gathered the girl into his arms and held her, soothingly stroking her hair until she was asleep again. Well, maybe third time would be the charm.

\*\*\_To be continued \_\*\*

End  
file.